

3 February 1987

A Cautious Professional

Robert Michael Gates

By PHILIP SHENON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2 — Robert M. Gates, President Reagan's nominee to be the next Director of Central Intelligence, is frequently described as a smart, cautious intelligence analyst.

Man
in the
News

These are characteristics that have led Mr. Gates to key intelligence posts under four Presidents and brought him enthusiastic, bipartisan

support on Capitol Hill. At 43 years old, Mr. Gates would be the youngest Director of Central Intelligence, replacing a man 30 years his senior.

Mr. Gates, a career officer who is now the No. 2 official at the Central Intelligence Agency, is expected to face few hurdles in winning Senate confirmation.

Still, he is certain to be questioned about his role in the sale of American arms to Iran and the diversion of profits to Nicaraguan rebel groups. A report issued last week by the Senate Intelligence Committee notes that Mr. Gates learned last October of the possibility that money from the Iran arms sale had been funneled to the rebels, known as contras, and raises questions about how he handled that information. The diversion was confirmed publicly more than a month later.

'Straightforward' Testimony

The chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Senator David L. Boren, Democrat of Nebraska, said in an interview that he had reviewed Mr. Gates's recent testimony before the committee about the Iran affair and "it appears, on first impression, that he was pretty straightforward with the committee."

Elsewhere on Capitol Hill, the reaction to Mr. Gates's appointment was overwhelmingly supportive.

Representative David McCurdy, Democrat of Oklahoma and a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said the appointment signaled a new era of cooperation between the C.I.A. and Congress — a relationship that had soured markedly under Mr. Gates's predecessor, William J. Casey.

"This is a clear shift in direction," Representative McCurdy said. "What Bob presents, and represents, is the professional, analytical view, whereas Casey was more of an advocate. This is going to be a necessary shot-in-the-arm for Congress."

Noted for Loyalty

Lawmakers have indicated that they might also raise questions about the degree of independence that Mr. Gates would exercise under President Reagan.

While he is admired for the intellectual freedom he stirred among intelligence analysts at the C.I.A., Mr. Gates was also noted for his unwavering loyalty to Mr. Casey, a fierce advocate of the Reagan Administration's foreign policy, particularly its support for the Nicaraguan rebels.

A former American intelligence official who questioned Mr. Gates's willingness to argue against misguided Administration policies said: "He has very effectively assumed the identity of each of the very different masters he has served in the past eight to 10 years. That's not my notion of independence."

Yet at the same time, some legislators credited Mr. Gates with keeping the agency's intelligence analyses objective, even if they conflicted with Administration policy.

Representative McCurdy said he had seen a "remarkable shift in the quality" of intelligence reports prepared by C.I.A. analysts under the direction of Mr. Gates, who is a Soviet affairs specialist.

According to the C.I.A., Mr. Gates has never worked as a "spy" — the sort of cloak-and-dagger agent found darting through foreign capitals in popular fiction. Instead, he has been a desk-bound analyst of the information gathered by others.

Access to President Promised

Lawmakers and former intelligence officials said they understood that Mr. Gates had been promised easy access to the President. Mr. Casey is one of Mr. Reagan's closest friends and most powerful advisers on foreign policy.

"While he may not have as much access as Casey, Gates can develop a good rapport with the President if he works it right," said Adm. Stansfield Turner, who served as the Director of Central Intelligence under President Carter.

Robert Michael Gates was born Sept. 25, 1943, in Wichita, Kan. He graduated in 1965 from the College of William and Mary, where he was named the graduate "who has made the greatest contribution to his fellow man."

He also holds a master's degree in history from Indiana University and a doctorate in Russian and Soviet history from Georgetown University.

He joined the C.I.A. in 1966 as an intelligence analyst. In 1974, Mr. Gates was assigned to the National Security Council staff and remained there under Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter, returning to the C.I.A. five years later.

Mr. Gates, who many regard as intensely ambitious, moved up quickly through the agency. In 1982, he was appointed Deputy Director for Intelligence, directing the component of the C.I.A. responsible for all intelligence analysis.

In that post, Mr. Gates was credited with raising the number and quality of intelligence reports. Among other things, he instituted a method of holding C.I.A. analysts accountable for their record of forecasting on foreign policy.

Mr. Gates's ties with Mr. Casey led to his appointment last year as Deputy Director of Central Intelligence and then acting C.I.A. Director when Mr. Casey underwent surgery last December for removal of a brain tumor.

A number of Administration officials said they believed that Mr.

Gates was nominated to his new post at Mr. Casey's urging.

As is typical of career intelligence officers, little is known about Mr. Gates's life away from the agency. It is known that he and his wife, Rebecca, have two young children.

Role in Iran Arms Deal

Mr. Gates's involvement in the Iran arms deal is expected to come under intense scrutiny during the Senate confirmation hearings.

The Intelligence Committee report released last week said that he had been involved in efforts to provide Iran with intelligence information, apparently in the hope that Iranian officials, thankful for the information and arms, would assist in freeing American hostages held in Lebanon.

Continued

In January 1986, the report said, Mr. Gates participated in a meeting to discuss the information that was destined for Iran.

"Gates testified that he objected to the release of some specific intelligence relating to Iraq but that he was overruled," it said. "C.I.A. was directed to prepare the intelligence material."

Last October, the report said, Mr. Gates became aware of concern by a senior C.I.A. official that money from the Iran arms sale had been diverted to the contras.

"Gates directed that Casey be briefed, and the C.I.A. officer testified that he met with Casey on Oct. 7 and repeated what he had told Gates," the report added.

Senators are expected to ask what Mr. Gates did with information about the possible diversion over the course of the following month. It was not until late November, the Administration has said, that President Reagan became aware of the diversion.

According to the committee's report, Mr. Gates and Mr. Casey went to the National Security Adviser, John M. Poindexter, on Oct. 15 and urged him to disclose the Iran initiative "to the public, to avoid having it 'leak out in drips and drabs.'"

Changing Leadership at the C.I.A.: Six Who Have Served

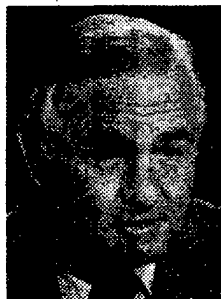
Every President since the C.I.A. was founded 40 years ago has nominated at least one Director of Central Intelligence. Presidents Truman, Johnson and — with yesterday's nomination of Robert M.

Gates — President Reagan have each named two. In the last decade, directors have left office on virtually the same timetable as the Presidents they served. These are the most recent directors.



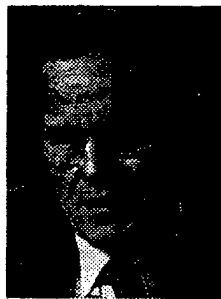
William J. Casey
Jan. 28, 1981-
Jan. 29, 1987

Veteran of Office of Strategic Services in World War II . . . Lawyer and venture capitalist . . . Appointed chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1971 . . . Became Ronald Reagan's campaign manager, 1980.



Adm. Stansfield Turner
March 9, 1977-
Jan. 20, 1981

Naval Academy classmate of Jimmy Carter . . . Named president of the Naval War College, 1972 . . . Appointed fleet and area commander of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1974 . . . Commander in chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe, 1975.



George Bush
Jan. 30, 1976-
Jan. 20, 1977

Republican Congressman, 1966-70 . . . Representative to the United Nations, 1970 . . . Named chairman of the Republican National Committee, 1972 . . . Headed the new United States liaison office in Peking, 1974-75.



William E. Colby
Sept. 4, 1973-
Jan. 30, 1976

Joined C.I.A. in 1950 . . . Named C.I.A. station chief in Saigon, 1959. . . Deputy director of Vietnamese pacification program, 1968 . . . Presided over Operation Phoenix to weed out Vietcong agents, which he later admitted may have involved "some illegal killing."



James R. Schlesinger
Feb. 2, 1973-
July 2, 1973

Assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget, 1969 . . . Nominated by President Nixon to be chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, 1971 . . . Secretary of Defense, 1973-75 . . . Named Secretary of Energy by President Carter, 1977.



Richard M. Helms
June 30, 1966-
Feb. 2, 1973

O.S.S. veteran . . . First career officer to head the C.I.A. . . . Appointed Ambassador to Iran by President Nixon, 1973.